AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 (original). A method of derivatising a polymeric material of a type which includes encapsulated water, the method comprising:

(a) selecting a first hydrated polymeric material which includes encapsulated water;

(b) reducing the level of encapsulated water in said first hydrated polymeric material to produce a second polymeric material;

(c) treating said second polymeric material with derivatisation means for derivatising said second polymeric material.

2 (original). A method according to claim 1, wherein the difference between the wt% of water in said first polymeric material and that in said second polymeric material is at least 40wt% and said second polymeric material includes less than 10wt% of encapsulated water.

3 (currently amended). A method according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein said first hydrated polymeric material comprises a third polymeric material which is cross-linked by a cross-linking means.

4 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein said first polymeric material is prepared by selecting a third polymeric material

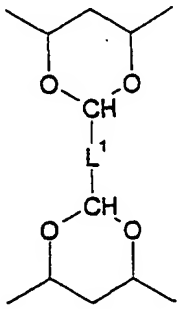
and treating it with a said cross-linking means, wherein said third polymeric material includes functional groups selected from hydroxyl, carboxylic acid, carboxylic acid derivatives and amine groups.

5 (currently amended). A method according to claim 3 ~~or claim 4~~, wherein said third polymeric material is a polyvinyl polymer.

6 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any of claims 3 to 5~~claim 3, wherein said third polymeric material is polyvinylalcohol.

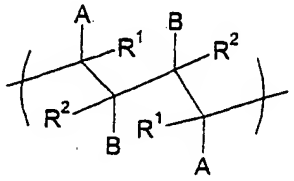
7 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claims~~claim 1, wherein said first polymeric material comprises cross-linked polyvinylalcohol.

8 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein said first polymeric material includes a moiety of formula I



wherein L^1 is a residue of said cross-linking material.

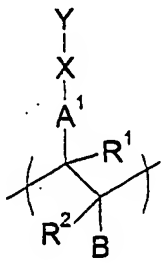
9 (currently amended). A method according to claim 3 ~~or claim 4~~, wherein said cross-linking means comprises a fourth polymeric material which includes a repeat unit of formula



wherein A and B are the same or different, are selected from optionally-substituted aromatic and heteroaromatic groups and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group and R^1 and R^2 independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups.

10 (original). A method according to claim 9, wherein A and B are different, are selected from optionally-substituted aromatic and heteroaromatic groups and at least one of A or B comprises a relatively polar atom or group, R^1 and R^2 independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups.

11 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein said first polymeric material includes a moiety of formula



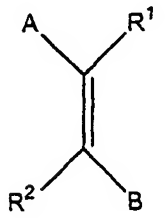
wherein ~~R^1, R^2 and B are as described in claims 9 and 10, A^1 represents a residue of group A described in claims 9 and 10~~ R^1 and R^2 independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups, A1 represents a residue of group A and A and B are the same or different, are selected from optionally-substituted aromatic and heteroaromatic groups and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group, after the reaction involving said third and fourth polymeric materials, Y represents a residue of said fourth polymeric material after said reaction involving said third and fourth polymeric materials and X represents a linking atom or group extending between the residues of said third and fourth polymeric materials.

12 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein, in step (b), drying is undertaken at a temperature in the range 10°C to 60°C.

13 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein, in step (c), said second polymeric material is derivatised in a first derivatisation step wherein said second polymeric material is treated with a first derivatisation material which reacts with said second polymeric material wherein said reaction is carried out in the presence of less than 5wt% water and is carried out in an organic solvent.

14 (original). A method according to claim 13, wherein said first derivatisation material includes one or more carbonyl, carboxyl, hydroxyl, epoxy, halogen or amino functional groups.

15 (currently amended). A method according to claim 13 ~~or claim 14~~, wherein said first derivatisation material is selected from compounds of general formula



wherein A, B, R^1 and R^2 are as described in claims 9 and/or 10.

16 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, wherein derivatisation of the second polymeric material includes one or more derivatisation steps arranged to introduce a linking moiety on said second polymeric material, wherein the linking moiety is arranged to link the second polymeric material to an active moiety.

17 (original). A method according to claim 16, wherein the active moiety is biocompatible.

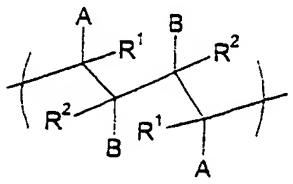
18 (currently amended). A method according to claim 16 ~~or claim 17~~, wherein said active material is selected from amino acid containing moieties, peptides, proteins, conducting polymers, and organic semi-conductors or said active moiety may be part of a sensor for monitoring cell chemistry or biology.

19 (currently amended). A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, which involves increasing the level of encapsulated water at some stage after step (b).

20 (currently amended). A method of making a polymeric material, the method comprising:

(a) selecting a fifth polymeric material which comprises:

(i) a third polymeric material ~~as described in claims 3 to 6~~ cross-linked by a fourth polymeric material ~~as described in claims 9 or 10~~ wherein said fourth polymeric material includes a repeat unit of formula



wherein A and B are the same or different, are selected from optionally-substituted aromatic and heteroaromatic groups and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group and R^1 and R^2 independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups.; or

(ii) a polymeric material which includes a moiety of formula VI as described in claim 11; and

(b) treating said fifth polymeric material with derivatisation means for derivatising said fifth polymeric material.

21 (currently amended). A derivatised polymeric material prepared or preparable in a method according to ~~any of claims 1 to 19~~claim 1.

22 (currently amended). A method of preparing a material for a biological application, the method comprising forming micro topographical features in a surface of a first~~, second or fifth~~ polymeric material according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1.

23 (currently amended). A polymeric material ~~selected from~~ comprising a said first~~, second or fifth~~ polymeric ~~materials~~ material ~~or a hydrogel~~ according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1 having micro-topographical features.

24 (currently amended). A wound care product comprising a derivatised polymeric material or hydrogel according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1.

25 (currently amended). A method of treatment of the human or animal body, the method comprising positioning a derivatised polymeric material, hydrogel or wound care product according to ~~any preceding claim~~ claim 1 on or adjacent an area to be treated.

26 (cancelled).